

Southfield Public Schools  
24661 Lahser Road  
Southfield, Michigan 48033  
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House Bill 6004 is part of a package of bills that will seriously change the way public schools are governed in Michigan and they will seriously and negatively impact our already financially crippled schools

This package of bills is based on the false assumption that Michigan's schools do not serve the students of Michigan. I just returned from the annual conference of the Michigan Association of School Boards, attended by 600 of Michigan's school board members (all of whom attended without being paid) and school superintendents. After listening to the awards, attending classes and hearing about the good things happening in Michigan I believe that the education of our children is in good hands in spite of the dilution of school aid funds to pay for charter schools and other experimental forms of public education.

I am Vice President of the Southfield Public School Board. A recent representative from Michigan State University interviewed 24 of Southfield's seniors and she said, "I love to come to Southfield. Your students are great!" She is right. Our students go to the best universities in the country because their education is always our primary consideration, and the Board makes its decisions based on sound mathematical data.

In addition to having a superior staff and administration, Southfield buildings and programs are kept in tiptop condition to help prepare our students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This takes a great deal of money. We in Southfield are optimistic that the economy of Michigan will improve when the world discovers that most of Michigan's public school districts provide outstanding education, and Michigan has water. Southfield Public Schools are already showing a zero decrease in school population and even a modest increase.

House Bill 6004 will allow the State to take an empty building paid for with taxpayer dollars. The bill will allow a district to take back a building after asking the State to return it. Then the district will have 2 years to fill the building with students or lose it permanently. In that event the citizens will have a choice of sending their students to the EAA school or paying more taxes for new school buildings. In essence you would be taking buildings that Southfield parents paid for and using them for other students. And, you would be doing it at will in any district you choose based on your idea of what is a failing school.

As a taxpayer, and as the School Board representative of taxpayers, I protest the snatching of our property by the State to further an unproven model of public education. The model is probably correct in its legal aspects, but:

Does HB 6004 take into consideration sound mathematical data on what works in education and what does not? No!

Was HB 6004 constructed by educators experienced in educational research? No!

Will this bill promote superior education for public school students? Maybe! The last answer is not good enough for 21<sup>st</sup> century education for 21<sup>st</sup> century students.

Fern Katz